

BROOMLEY & STOCKSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 7th July 2014 in the Community Centre, Stocksfield

- Present:** Ms M Hunt (in the Chair), Mrs A Dale (also present as a County Councillor),
Mr J Davison, Mr P Duncan, Dr M Mansour, Mr M Parker, Mrs K Pollock, Mr J Roy,
Prof. R Thompson, Dr P Vickers,
Mrs M Williams, Clerk to the Council
- Also Present:** Mr D Parke
20 residents from New Ridley
Mrs K Moore, Hexham Courant
- Apologies** Mr G Young

Ms Hunt opened the meeting by welcoming those present and advised that this was the last Parish Council meeting before September, there being no meeting in August.

14/33 Declarations of Interest

As a County Councillor, Mrs Dale declared an interest in discussions on planning applications.

Mrs Dale also stressed that while she might give advice on such matters as consultations, she never made her views as a County Councillor known.

14/34 Public Participation

Traffic Calming

A resident raised concerns about the speed of traffic on the A695 particularly on the bend near the Baptist Church. She also asked that consideration be given to installing a 20 mph speed limit throughout Painshawfield Estate, and in Guessburn, Hall Farm Close and the Pastures.

Mrs Dale, as a County Councillor, made the following comments:

- These issues had been raised on previous occasions.
- 20 mph in Guessburn would require the installation of speed humps
- 20 mph on the Painshawfield Estate – she is to discuss this with the resident
- Speed on the A695 has always been a problem and a VACS machine had recently been installed at Branch End
- Mrs Dale advised that she would raise the concerns with County Council Highways officials but pointed out that generally, before action could be taken, the area of concern had to be designated as an “accident black spot”

It was noted that the school bus dropped children off near the butchers shop.

Prof. Thompson alleged that many of those who speed through Painshawfield Estate are residents of the Estate. It was felt that traffic calming was outside the role of the Estate Committee.

New Ridley development

Residents were invited to make their views known to the Parish Council.

Concerns were raised that policies were not mentioned in the debate at the Planning Committee Meeting, residents wondered what the point was of having policies if they were going to be ignored.

Mrs Dale, as a County Councillor, suggested that the key issue was the inconsistency of the Planning Committee’s decision. She made the following points:

The main policy relating to this particular application was about sustainability and the impact on the Green Belt. Members of the Planning Committee should be asked why they did not consider this when making their initial decision twelve months ago. She also suggested that members of the Planning Committee should be asked what their views had been when making their original decision, and what was the reason for their change of view.

It is Government policy to provide affordable housing in sustainable settlements and in the Green Belt.

The policy on impact is less clear.

Over 80% of appeals by developers were being won.

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Concerns were raised about the legality of the decision made by the Planning Committee. Again as a County Councillor, Mrs Dale advised that as long as the planning application was accompanied by the correct paperwork and the councillors had read the papers, the decision is legal.

Ms Hunt suggested that the main issue is how to interpret the term “sustainable development”. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is now part of the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework.

It was noted that any request for a judicial review has to be made by 4th August. Residents would need sound advice before considering whether it was worth going to a judicial review. It was noted that this could be a very expensive process.

Residents said that they would like to hold a public meeting to discuss the issue further, and it was suggested that the Planning Officer might be asked to attend.

Ms Hunt drew the discussion to a close and thanked residents for attending and for raising their concerns with the Parish Council.

After the residents had left, Ms Hunt asked Mrs Dale to arrange a public meeting as she would be on holiday.

Ovingham Bridge

Mrs Dale, as a County Councillor, suggested that if anyone had problems arising from the closure of Ovingham Bridge they should contact her.

14/35 Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd June 2014

Dr Vickers proposed and Mrs Dale seconded and it was agreed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd June 2014 were a true record of the meeting.

14/36 Matters Arising

Hexham Bus Station – it was noted that there was to be an “Engagement Event” at Prospect House in Hexham. There was an implication that the preferred option for a new bus station was the site at Loosing Hill. Any councillors who attend the engagement event are asked to report back to the Parish Council.

County Energy Policy – It had been agreed to write to the County Council regarding the development of an over-arching energy strategy for Northumberland, and the letter had now been sent.

Casual Vacancy for a Parish Councillor – It was noted that the vacancy has to be advertised and that the process was now in place. It was reported that there will be no need for an election and that a new parish councillor can be co-opted.

14/37 Correspondence

Correspondence received since the meeting of 2nd June was listed on the agenda and was noted.

14/38 Finance

The financial papers for June had been circulated and were noted.

June Expenditure

Mr Duncan proposed and Mrs Dale seconded and it was agreed that the Accounts and Income and Expenditure for June be accepted.

Arrangements for signing cheques and authorising action over the summer – it was suggested and agreed that July and some August expenditure be authorised at the August meeting of the General Governance Advisory Group.

Resignation of Clerk – it was noted that Mrs Williams had tendered her resignation. Mrs Williams offered, and her offer was accepted, to do the accounts for the October meeting of the Parish Council. Mrs Williams will prepare the accounts for the September meeting of the Council, but arrangements will have to be made for the cheques to be sent out.

Savings Funds – as the funds set aside in the Unity Trust account for possible public/planning inquiries, now totalling £9000, will not be needed in the immediate future, it was suggested that these monies be re-distributed as follows:

£1000	a second defibrillator
£1000	Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) refurbishment fund – this would bring the total in this fund to £4800
£2000	Sportsfield Car Park fund – this would bring the total in this fund to £4500
£2000	Branch End Play Area (BEPA) refurbishment fund – this would bring the total in this fund to £3800

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£3000 to be left for possible future public inquiry costs

Prof Thompson proposed and Mr Duncan seconded and the proposal outlined above for the re-allocation of Savings Funds was agreed.

Annual Audit - The Annual Return had been submitted to the external auditors who have made some queries. The Clerk has responded to these queries.

14/39 Appointment of a new Parish Clerk

Ms Hunt advised that Mrs Williams had handed in her notice and that she would be retiring with effect from 12th September. However, Mrs Williams has annual leave to take and will actually leave her post on 29th August.

At the most recent meeting of the General Governance Advisory Group, discussion had taken place as to the next steps to be taken, and it was agreed that Ms Hunt and Mrs Dale would together take the necessary action, including the production of a timetable and the documents required for the recruitment of a new Clerk. It was noted that the job description and contract of employment are both up-to-date.

The advertisement would be published in the Hexham Courant of 11th July, with the closing date for applications being 28th July, and interviews to take place in August. An interview panel of three councillors would be required. The post would also be advertised through Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC), and on the Parish Council website and the parish notice boards.

Since it was unlikely that a new Clerk would be in post before September, Mrs Williams was asked to contact other Clerks to see if anyone is able to take the Minutes at the September Parish Council meeting. Ms Hunt and Mrs Dale would monitor incoming correspondence in the absence of Mrs Williams.

It was recommended and agreed that the appointment of a new Clerk is the appropriate time to consider offering a contributory pension scheme. It was noted that all employers will have to offer pension schemes in the near future. Mrs Williams advised that there is currently £3250 earmarked for Clerk's pension in the Unity Trust Reserves.

14/40 Community Development

Stocksfield Community Association Trading Arm (SCATA) – Mr Duncan advised that the purchase of the two development sites had now been completed. The contractor had erected fencing and strimmed the site at Guessburn. It was planned to hold a ground-breaking ceremony during week commencing 15th July, with construction to start in week commencing 21st July. Work on the two sites will be run in parallel. The owners of Branch House have kindly agreed to allow their car park to be used for construction vehicles and the site cabin.

Ms Hunt said that all concerned should be congratulated on reaching this stage of the project.

Provision of Christmas Trees – It was agreed to purchase two trees, one for Broomley School and one for the Dr Syntax pub. It was also agreed to purchase a supply of coloured bulbs for the school tree.

Carers Information Card – Feedback is awaited from Michelle O'Brien of the County Council's Adult Social Care team.

Provision of new Burial Ground – Mrs Dale advised that she is to arrange a meeting with the Vicar.

Provision of a Defibrillator – The Clerk has been in touch with the Stephen Carey Fund and is awaiting a response. She has also contacted one or two potential funders.

It was reported that, since the last meeting, the Clerk has received donations of £2300 towards the cost of providing a defibrillator. As this will largely cover the cost of one piece of equipment, it was agreed that, subject to approval by the Golf Club, a second machine should be provided at the Golf Club for use at the southern end of the village..

Memorial Garden/Peace Garden

An official dedication event has been arranged for 20th September, with children from Broomley School being involved and refreshments available at the Baptist Church Hall. A contingent from 39 Regiment at Albemarle has also been asked to attend. Ms Hunt is to plant the last rose in the bed on 8th July.

Solar Panels

A letter had been written to the relevant landlords suggesting that they might consider providing solar panels on their properties in Stocksfield, in particular Graham House, Ford Rise and Ladywell.

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14/41 Consultations

Local Bus Services – 613

Mrs Dale advised that this service is to continue for the time being.

Rural Housing Survey – Mr Parker has completed this on behalf of the Parish Council.

14/42 Advisory Groups & Representatives

a) General Governance Advisory Group

The notes of the meeting of the General Governance Advisory Group held on 16th June had been circulated.

Banking – It was agreed to review the question of electronic banking in December or January.

Neighbourhood Watch – Prof. Thompson agreed to chair the meeting on Neighbourhood Watch schemes which had now been arranged for 13th October. It was stressed that the Parish Council was only facilitating the meeting and would not be running any of the schemes.

Grants – A request had been received from Stocksfield Community Association for assistance for the purchase of an up-dated PA system and new IT equipment for the play group. Mr Parker proposed and Mr Duncan seconded and it was agreed to make a grant of £500.

NE43 News – Mr Duncan agreed to write an article about Fraser Forster and include something about Ivor Gray. Ms Hunt read a letter which Ivor Gray had sent to the Parish Council.

Transport & Highways –

B6309 through Hindley – Mrs Dale advised that, as a County Councillor, she has this matter in hand.

Children & Young People's Facilities

It was reported that the annual inspection of BEPA and Kate's Plain had been carried out by RoSPA and that there were no major issues. Minor issues had been passed to the handyman for attention.

Drainage of Kate's Plain – A report from Allendale Estates is still awaited.

Branch End Play Area Usage – Mrs Williams had circulated the latest usage figures for Branch End Play Area. It was noted that the figures depended on the number of times anyone actually visited the area and recorded the number of people present.

Branch End Play Area - Mrs Williams reported that she had received a phone call from the owner of Garroway, the house next to BEPA. The house is let. The owner had expressed concern that the birch copse had grown very high and that trees from the road along the boundary were overgrowing her hedge. It was agreed that:

- 1 The Handyman be asked to cut off the lower limbs of all of the trees along the boundary so that they clear the hedge
- 2 The Handyman be asked to check the cherry trees near the road to ensure that they are not sending suckers into the garden of Garroway
- 3 The Handyman be asked to strim all the rough grass around the boundary at BEPA. He may do this in any case later in the summer.

It was further agreed that Mrs Dale and Mr Duncan would look at the copse and make a recommendation to the next meeting of the General Governance Advisory Group as to any further action required.

Communications

NE43 News – The next issue will be distributed at the end of August.

Website – The Clerk continues to up-date the website.

[Suspension of Standing Orders – Mrs Dale proposed and Mr Roy seconded and it was agreed that Standing Orders should be suspended and the meeting should continue beyond 9.30 p.m.]

Rights of Way & Environment Advisory Group

Mr Roy advised that paths had been cleared, balsam bashing was continuing and the development of a joint leaflet with Prudhoe Pathforce was in progress.

b) Planning Advisory Group

The response to the following planning applications was endorsed.

14/01744/FUL 19/06/14 Rose Cottage Ridley Mill	Change of use of land to be used as residential curtilage of property. Part of paddock to be made into a lawn/garden and	It was agreed that there were no objections to this application
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	erection of a post and rail fence. Erection of wooden shed used for Storage	
14/01877/FUL 14/01878/LBC 27/06/14 Apperley Farm	Re-submission - Installation of biomass boiler and pellet store Listed Building Consent Application Re-submission - Installation of biomass boiler and pellet store	It was agreed that there were no objections to this application
12/03173/OUT 26/10/12 Land to rear of Mole Cottage, New Ridley	Notice of Appeal against refusal – response to Planning Inspectorate by 17 th July	It was agreed to re-iterate the comments made previously

Hoodsclouse Surface Mine – It was noted that UK Coal had withdrawn their application for this site. Whittonstall Action Group (WAG) had expressed thanks for the support of the Parish Council in their fight against this proposal. It was agreed that it was disappointing that it had not been possible to see the Planning Officer's report on the application. WAG is to continue in existence, and Mr Parke was thanked for representing the Parish Council on this group.

New Ridley Development – A draft letter to the County had been submitted, and with minor amendments it was agreed to send this to the Chairman of the West Area Planning Committee.

It was felt that as the development is to go ahead, the Parish Council should consider how to make the best of the situation and to look at the S106 agreement.

Merryshields Farm – It was noted that SITA had put this farm up for sale.

Sports Facilities Advisory Group –

The notes of the most recent meeting of the Sports Advisory Group had been circulated.

Bootcamps – As recommended by the meeting, it was agreed to offer both groups free use of the fields until September 2014 and then a session charge of £15 for both groups. It was further agreed that the Parish Council needs confirmation that the groups are covered by their own public liability insurance. It was also agreed to draw up an agreement for the groups to sign.

It was noted that since the construction of the rabbit proof fence the number of rabbits on the sportsfields had decreased.

It was recommended that a letter be written to the owners of the relevant properties in the Pastures pointing out that they did not have permission to access the sportsfields from their properties.

It was reported that the Cricket teams were doing well this season and that the Football Club is hoping to field 12 teams in September, with two being new under-17s teams.

MUGA rates – Mr Duncan advised that it was important for the economic viability of the MUGA that its income comes from advance bookings. The point was reiterated, however, that individuals and small groups of young people consider the fees to be too expensive. Mr Duncan is to raise the issue with Mr Catnach and the possibility of the Parish Council subsidising young people is to be considered.

14/43 Council Representatives

Northumberland County Council West Area Committee – the next meeting is on 8th July in Prudhoe.

East Tynedale Town and Parish Councils Forum – the next meeting is on 14th July in Newton. Mrs Dale advised that she would attend. There will be a presentation on Fracking by a lecturer from Newcastle University. Ms Hunt reported that all councillors are invited to attend the presentation.

14/44 Any Other Business - none

14/45 Date of next meeting

1st September - 7.30 p.m. Community Centre

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

At the close of the meeting three former members of the Parish Council joined those present and a presentation was made to the retiring Parish Clerk of a picture and a bouquet.